

LETTER FROM MR. GARRISON.

Geneva (Switzerland), Aug. 30, 1867.

DEAR MR. RAE—When I saw you in London, you will remember that I declined giving a specific promise to attend the Crystal Palace Temperance *Fête* on the 3rd of September; though I strongly expressed both my wish and my purpose to do so, should circumstances prove favourable. If I failed to come in person, I pledged to send you my testimony in the shape of a letter, to be used as you might think proper. That pledge I shall now redeem, not being able to be present for reasons which are decisive, but which it is unnecessary here to specify. I shall deeply regret any disappointment that may be caused by my non-appearance. My heart is, and for forty years has been, thoroughly in your noble cause; and it would give me the very highest gratification to witness so grand an assemblage of its true and undaunted friends. My own disappointment, therefore, will be duly appreciated.

What can I say, that has not already been said and repeated a million times over, in words of warning, entreaty, affection, and love, respecting the omnipresent curse of intemperance, and the solemn duty of all who claim to be animated by the sentiments of humanity, or governed by the principles of Christianity, to labour for the removal of that curse from the earth by an uncompromising testimony against the habitual or moderate use of intoxicating drinks? The sure, the only remedy is to be found in obedience to the saving injunction, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." There are many evils of colossal dimensions, which are merely local, and bounded by certain degrees of latitude and longitude. The evil of intemperance follows the sun in its circuit, overleaps all geographical barriers, disregards all differences of climate, conquers all nationalities, and covers the whole earth with its desolating tracks. For the last three centuries chattel slavery has cursed almost exclusively the African race; but intemperance scoffs at all complexional, all tribal distinctions, and, whether in barbaric or civilised climes, among "Greenland's icy mountains," or "on Africa's coral strand,"—whether in Heathendom or Christendom,—strikes down its victims by the same process, and sends them to the same premature grave.

Undoubtedly, it would be taking an inadequate view to ascribe its awful prevalence wholly to any one custom or habit. It has its roots in oppression, ignorance, degradation, poverty, delusion, sensualism, a passion for abnormal excitement, the supremacy of the animal over the spiritual nature, the lack of steady and remunerative labour. But its most productive cause, by far, is to be found in the intoxicating and seductive quality of alcohol itself, and in the consequent use of it as a beverage, more or less diluted, among all classes of society. Moderate drinking is the immediate cause of all the immoderate drinking in the world; and when it is banished from society as a habit or fashion, the work of reformation will be transcendently glorious. Of the myriads who have gone down to drunkards' graves, not one ever purposely sought his miserable fate, or failed to find it through the trap-door of moderate drinking. As in the struggle for the abolition of negro slavery it was the so-called benevolent, tender-hearted, Christian slave-holders, not the brutal overseers and drivers, that constituted the body-guard of the infernal system, warding off all attacks upon it on account of their reputedly upright character; so, in regard to intemperance, it finds its shelter and source, not among its victims reeling in the streets or lying in the gutter, but in the persistent habits of otherwise respectable and often exemplary men, sometimes even reformers in other directions, who, holding the doctrine of total abstinence to be absurd or fanatical, and the use of intoxicating stimulants (in moderation, of course!) to be not only quite innocent, but essential to good fellowship, generous hospitality, and good physical condition, daily set an example at their own tables or at the festive board which is very potential for evil. What more can be done to arouse them to a consciousness of the fact that they are among the greatest stumbling-blocks in the way of the progress of the temperance movement?

Trusting that your vast gathering at the Crystal Palace, as now designed, will give a fresh impetus to that movement,

I remain, yours,

In the patience of hope and the labour of love,

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

Robert Rae, Esq.

